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## Employers liable for harassment: PPA

**EMPLOYERS** are being warned that they can be held “vicariously liable for acts of sexual harassment by their employees”, in the wake of a former pharmacist’s revelations that she suffered abuse while an intern with “one of Australia’s largest discount pharmacies” (*PD* 16 Aug).

A spokesperson for union group, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) told *Pharmacy Daily* that it had supported members in disputes over sexual harassment in the past, and encouraged pharmacists who have experienced harassment to seek advice from the

union, the Human Rights and Equal Rights Commissions.

“It is unlawful to sexually harass someone at work in all Australian jurisdictions,” the spokesperson said.

“While the person who sexually harasses someone else is liable for their own behaviour, employers can also be held vicariously liable for acts of sexual harassment by their employees or agents.

“Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace for employees and sexual harassment is a safety issue as it affects the health of employees.



“It is a difficult and complex matter – but can be resolved within an organisation if they are willing to assist.

“All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require employers or managers to respond quickly and appropriately.”

## TGA hits adverts

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has clarified possible steps the Secretary of the Department of Health may take when issuing advertising direction notices.

Where a breach of the Therapeutic Goods Act has occurred, the Secretary may direct a non-compliant advertiser to cease using the advertisement, make a retraction or correction, recover an advertisement in circulation, destroy the advertisement and/or cease to make a particular claim or representation made by the advertisement.

Failure to comply with a direction may result in civil proceedings or criminal prosecution.

The TGA is also obliged to publish all directions on its website.

Three parties were given directions this year: Auzsupps, ESR You and Cumhur Keskin.

Full details of the six stages of advertising complaints handling can be found on the website at [tga.gov.au](http://tga.gov.au).

## Pharmacy staff hurt in armed robbery

**A KNIFE** wielding 19-year-old has been arrested and charged over a robbery at a Melbourne pharmacy that saw a 51-year-old female staff member injured.

Victorian police alleged the teenager and an accomplice entered the store on Union Road, Ascot Vale, brandishing machetes at two pharmacy employees and a security guard.

The duo are reported to have bound the security guard’s



hands, while the female staff member’s hand was injured during the incident, before the bandits made off with cash and prescription medicines.

## Don't stop statins

**PATIENTS** aged 75 and older who abandon statin treatment for high cholesterol have an increased risk of suffering a cardiovascular event, research published in the *European Heart Journal* reveals.

Data showed that statin discontinuation was associated with a 33% increased risk of admission for cardiovascular event in 75-year-old primary prevention patients.

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## Dispensary Corner

IT'S remarkable how humans will refuse to use services specifically designed for the problems they have, but research by the United Kingdom's largest online pharmacy, Pharmacy2U, has found internet searches such as "how to know chest pains are serious", rose by almost 9,000% between 2015 and 2018.

The extent to which Brits will suffer in silence to avoid seeking professional medical advice is alarming, with words such as "acne" and "IBS", alongside "treatment", searched for on average more than 100,000 times every year.

Research found 39% of respondents had lived with a condition for a significant period to avoid the embarrassment of talking about it, and 12% of people are currently suffering from something they are reluctant to seek medical help for.

Speaking of embarrassment, 16% of millennials suffering from an "embarrassing" condition, such as thrush or constipation, won't collect medication from a pharmacy because they are too embarrassed to ask someone for it.

Call us crazy, but we'd say it's less embarrassing asking for medication from a trained professional than explaining to your friends that you're in hospital because your embarrassing problem got a whole lot worse.

In fact, it's surprising a Brit would need an excuse to whinge.

## World's best health system

MINISTER for Health, Greg Hunt, speaking at the National Press Club in Canberra last week, announced the launch of *Australia's Long Term National Health Plan: to build the world's best health system*, which commits an injection of \$435 billion, including improved access to medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

The plan will provide a blueprint for boosting health care in Australia, including guaranteeing Medicare, supporting public and private hospitals, improving private health insurance, prioritising mental health and preventative health and investing in health and medical research.

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the commitment with CEO, Kristin Michaels, saying "As custodians of 20% of PBS expenditure, hospital pharmacists are essential to ensuring the safe and optimal use of some of the most cutting-edge medicines, which help manage many aggressive and complex diseases.

"Increased access to the latest, high-quality medicines through the

## Vit A for skin

NEW research published in *JAMA Dermatology*, and involving more than 120,000 people, shows vitamin A can lower risk of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) - see [jamanetwork.com](http://jamanetwork.com).



PBS – many of which are managed by hospital pharmacists embedded in multidisciplinary hospital teams – will reinforce this pillar of the healthcare system, supporting optimal care for more Australians."

The new national health plan also outlines the government's commitment to increase funding for all Australian public hospitals, from \$100 billion between 2015–16 and 2019–20 to an estimated \$131 billion between 2020–21 and 2024–25.

"SHPA also welcomes the commitment to health and medical research – having recently established a Research stream of Specialty Practice – and prioritising mental health and preventative health, two areas within which safe and quality use of medicines is essential," Michaels said.

Access the national health plan at [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au).



## Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is Mr John Coutsouvelis, Experiential Development and Graduate Education, Monash University.



## Are you equipped for community pharmacy 2023?

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) recently released the 'Pharmacists in 2023' report which discusses a number of new models for community pharmacy practice. This includes shifting from treating illness to managing overall health and wellbeing, providing tailored health solutions and a more proactive approach to healthcare. The accompanying report describes how pharmacists' expertise can be recognised using the Australian advancing practice framework.

The impact of clinical pharmacy is increasingly evident in community practice. Community pharmacists need to undertake further education, and continue advancing their practice, to maintain relevant skills for a changing workforce. With evolution of community based clinical practice, programs such as the Monash University Master of Clinical Pharmacy (MCLinPharm) provide relevant education, delivered flexibly (e.g. online, single unit options).

The PSA report highlights that to meet growing health needs, community pharmacists need to have a greater level of responsibility in medication management and provide increased accessibility to primary care advice for consumers. The MCLinPharm teaches across these areas including quality use of medicines, evidence-based practice and research.

By undertaking units in areas of clinical focus including wound care, geriatrics, and palliative care, community pharmacists will graduate with high quality skills required for clinical practice.



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